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Mayan People Within and Beyond Boundaries: Social Categories and Lived Identity in Yucatán

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Mayan people within and beyond boundaries: Social categories and lived identity in Yucatán (Studies in anthropology and history, vol.25), by Peter Hervik. Harwood Academic Publishers, Amsterdam, 1999, xxxiv, 214pp., figures, maps, illustrations, plates, tables, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN 90-5702-340-7 (hardback).

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Few arenas of research are more contentious than cultural identity politics. Various feminisms, nationalisms, and ethnic movements clash with each other and with postmodern and materialist challenges to identity. In southern Mesoamerica these polemics play out in battles over identity-based movements for indigenous rights and remuneration. Peter Hervik continues these polemics with his emphasis on deconstruction and competition in Mayan People Within and Beyond Boundaries. His deconstruction of Mayan activism in the specific context of the northwestern Yucatecan (Mexico) town of Oxkutzcab involves a more generally critique of the romantic model of "primordial" Mayan continuity, from which local Mayan activism purportedly draws. Borrowing from cognitive anthropology and Bourdieu's conceptualization of social practice, Hervik stresses that contemporary socio-cultural realities should be approached in terms of current struggle, not as historical continuities per se. He goes beyond the 1980s postmodern attention to *textual* authority by attending to competing authoritative interests while *in the field*.

Hervik leads readers on a narrative trail that is sometimes confusing and interrupted with grammatical errors. Chapter One

introduces the reader to Oxkutzcab with an overview of the momentous changes in its history. Though cursory, the overview of Spanish colonization and of the recent replacement of subsistence agriculture by commercial fruit production, along with a later review of the 1800s Caste War, serves his overall critique of the model in which Mayas are imagined as a unified group since time immemorial. His choice of Oxkutzcab as a research site was fortuitous in this regard. It has a well-documented history of pre-Columbian and Invasion-era internecine conflict, and unlike settlements in southeastern Yucatán, its tighter integration into the Spanish and Mexican empires has involved it more directly to national and global changes.

In Chapter Two, Hervik accentuates the incongruities between Yucatec and academic ethnic categorizations. He dizzies the reader by moving between historical periods and between the ethnic categories used by Mayans, Mexicans, and foreigners. Although his employment of cognitive anthropology sometimes detracts from his discussion, the chapter does evoke a sense of blurred and mutable ethnic categories and processes of categorization. What emerges is that academicians impose their assumptions about primordial cultures in defining ethnic groups (i.e., "Maya" vs. "Western"), whereas Yucatec Mayas (who have long identified themselves as mestizos) categorize themselves and others according to a combination of shifting markers. Markers such as "race", dress, language, domestic economy, spirituality,

dance, generation, and ritual practice can vary even within the same household. Hervik spends considerable time analyzing the Yucatecan social category of *catrín*, presumably because it exemplifies the academic tendency to essentialize ethnic differences. Academicians mistakenly gloss *catrín* as 'non-Mayan Yucatecan', whereas the term is actually applied non-ethnically in Yucatán to pretentious Mayan women who abandon the "traditional" *jipil* blouse.

In Chapter Three Hervik detours to critique "Mayan" imagery constructed by three disparate external sources: 1) National Geographic, 2) Spanish colonial friar Diego de Landa, and 3) Yucatán newspaper editorials decrying Protestant evangelization as destructive to Mayan culture. While he demonstrates National Geographic's evolutionist and therefore depersonalized, timeless image of "Mayas", at times his multi-pronged attack seems overzealous. For example, he assumes that National Geographic reflects rather than engages U.S. middle class sensibilities, and he construes a National Geographic photo and caption of Mayas with basketballs as romantically primordial when it could be read as Mayan appropriation. The discussion of de Landa's atrocities seems out of place, even if intended to highlight the perils of ethnocentrism or Mayan activists' historiographic distortions of de Landa. More valuable is Hervik's point that critiques against Protestant evangelization are alarmist, especially when one

approaches conversions as Mayan agency rather than paternalistically viewing them as hegemony.

Hervik returns to the incongruities between Mayans' (mestizos'), academicians', and indigenous activists' models of "the Maya" in Chapters Four and Five. Most importantly, he sees local Mayan activist Dzul Ek as a cultural broker who has adopted the academic continuity model in order to claim the status of ethnographer, monopolize local representation, promote a positive ethnic consciousness, and procure special privileges and resources for Mayas. A strong case is made that Dzul Ek has constructed and embodied a highly partial Yucatec history and Mayan culture, even while assuming the role a detached authority-in some settings. Mayan agency, Hervik contends, is best seen as such creative and conscious maneuvering, not as resistance to other cultures that presumably contaminate their precious traditions.

Hervik grounds his deconstruction of the continuity model in Chapters Five and Six when he candidly describes the relationship between himself, Dzul Ek, and a U.S. folklorist in terms of competition for authority. He seems to feel that Dzul Ek tried to direct his fieldwork and manipulated him and his wife into supporting his Mayanist events, while they preferred neutral autonomy. Dzul Ek, in fact, had attracted many outside supporters to his Mayan revitalization efforts, especially through local

annual Yucatecan Okosta Pol ceremony. One such supporter is the U.S. folklorist, who gave Hervik the cold shoulder. Hervik interprets the latent hostility as a competition for authority, and he tenuously accuses the folklorist of romanticism based on his use of Victor Turner's ritual dramas and his decision to marry his American wife among his friends in Oxkutzcab. More rightly criticized as romantic was a team of French filmmakers who hilariously tried to remove the folklorist from an Okosta Pol dance because of his contaminating presence. Ultimately, Hervik concludes in Bourdieuan fashion that the competition between Dzul Ek, the folklorist, and himself was inevitable because of their different fields of interest. I am unconvinced of such inevitability, however, and believe it speaks more to the personal politics involved than the primacy of structural oppositions.

Indeed, in Chapter Seven Hervik thoughtfully represents the ethnographic research process not as struggle but as "shared social experience" that optimally leads both ethnographer and informants to question their interpretive biases. Shared social experience is not simply discursive, he reminds, but involves all the senses through engagement. Contrasting reflexivity in the field with the kind of textual reflexivity that can result in self-absorption, he argues that textual reflexivity should be limited to only those social and cultural factors germane to understanding others. Moreover, he points out that textual

reflexivity can never overcome writing's inevitable decontextualization, simplification, and objectification of shared social experience.

Mayan People Within and Beyond Boundaries is refreshingly honest and thoughtful, and challenges Mayanists to confront the often paternalistic reification of Mayan culture. Ironically, for all Hervik's emphasis on fieldwork, his ethnographic data is sparse save for descriptions of ethnic categorization and the Okosta Pol. Perhaps this is related to his rebuff of activist concerns about global capitalist integration and the corresponding research commitments, or to his nine-month field-stay during which his young family accompanied him. The book does little to illustrate shared social experiences in everyday Yucatecan life or relate the political economic inequalities that could have made Mayan activism seem less like an interested pursuit of special privileges. Despite these shortcomings and the editorial problems, the book demands the attention of Mayanist scholars concerned with ethnic categorization.

Hervik, Peter

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"Preface"

p.xxi "This book is about a native group with a famous past." Actually, this is less the case than the next statement: "It challenges previous constructions and representations of the Maya of Yucatan and offers new means of understanding Maya self-identification."

p.xxii Hervik admits postmodernism in his "decoding the ethnographers' use of literary devices to establish authority and legitimizing subjectivity" but goes beyond this by paying attention to methodology, contributing the concept of "shared social experience" [as if this were new].

p.xxii-xxiii He picked Oxxutzcab because of the presence of Maya activist and educator Carlos Armando Dzul Ek and the high number of bilingual speakers, as well as historical migration and socio-economic mobility and development, in which 3/4 of the inhabitants once farmed milpa in 1960, and now very few do. He did fieldwork his wife, 3 year old boy, and 1 year old twin boys.

p.xxiv Mentions how strange it is that 3 ethnographers were working in the same corner of Yucatan in the late 60s and early 70s but refuse to cite each others' work. [Later in the book he'll mention a run-in with another anthropologist: competing for representative voice].

p.xxvi Research plans were interrupted because the baby twins became the center of everyone's attention, and supposedly because people didn't differentiate themselves ethnically as they were supposed to in the anthropological literature, especially between mestizos and catrines mentioned by Richard Thompson for Ticul, only 17 kilometers away.

p.xxvii He seems to congratulate himself or condemn others for not mentioning their fieldwork situations, as if they were all the same. That 2 "Maya" women moved in to take care of his children meant that he was doing participant observation as a "mode of living."

p.xxviii Only spent 9 months in the field, and somehow expected to learn Maya in 2 months of language and writing classes, so he abandoned them for Spanish. "I was less interested in direct quotes, instead aspiring to embody and experience the prototype definitions of words and categories, while fully aware that such definitions could never be fully achieved but the process of trying to reach the definition itself would reveal bits and pieces of tacit knowledge necessary to use these categories." Interested in praxis and everyday experience, not distilled and posthoc categories reflected upon by informants.

p.xxix "...how the agents enact and come to embody public forms and live with them"

"Chapter One: The People of Oxxutzcab, Yucatan"

p.1 "Anyone who attempts to give an account of the history of the town of Oxxutzcab is forced to make an arbitrary selection of when and where to begin". Hervik begins w/ Classic Maya and pre-Classic Loltun cave, w/ writing dating back at least 3,000 years, but no depth here. Postclassic begins w/ Izta conquest of Chichen Itza, then Cocom lineage conquest of Izta, and then Xiu lineage conquest of Cocom.

p.2 It was the Xiu vs. Cocom rivalry that divided the Yucatecan resistance to the Spaniards, making conquest easier. Hervik then immediately jumps forward to the contemporary era when

Mayas are still using the Xiu and Cocom surnames to bolster their authority, such as a Xiu man who did nothing to deny newspaper rumors that he held an original Chilam Balam.

pp.2-3 Hervik shows his science/history side (as opposed to postmodernist) when he says "The practice of recycling names over centuries might lead the careless visitor to make quick conclusions about the persistence of Maya cultural continuity since the pre-hispanic period, but we need to caution against seeing contemporary naming practices as signs indicating that these people are the same as those who lived in the area eight centuries before. Such a view ignores breaches and discontinuities..." [Does he trace the discontinuities? Yes]

p.4-5 Hervik gives a somewhat confusing account of who Indios Hidalgos were. It's clear that they were intermediaries between the Spanish and Indians, but he cites Farriss as saying they were formed from the loyal indigenous troops who helped the Spanish in the conquest, but soon thereafter Hervik says that nobles like the Xius "and other Mexican groups settling in Yucatan" acquired the name and tax-free privileges. When the Spanish began appointing caciques accountable to them only, they began choosing from among the commoners, not nobles, further weakening them. This was exacerbated by the fact that tax privileges were cut in 1699. To make themselves more indispensable, the nobles organized military detachments to capture Maya refugees who fled encomienda.

p.5 Begins discussing the topography and geology, but no reference to map. A somewhat helpful one occurs on p.18.

p.6-9 Patchy colonial history doesn't even mention 1700s. Says that Oxkutzcab didn't have haciendas of solely henequen. Various legal measures were then enacted to get the Indians to pay religious and government taxes and expropriate communal lands, leading to the Caste War of 1847. Oxkutzcab lay in the zone controlled by Mayan soldiers. After the defeat of the Maya rebels, henequen production took off throughout Yucatan, but other crops were important as well like cattle, sugar, maize, and honey. 7 large haciendas in Oxkutzcab, and linked to Merida by train in 1900. After the Revolution, haciendas broken up and trend towards small-scale fruit production. [jumpy, back and forth history in which reader doesn't know when and where he's talking about Oxkutzcab or Yucatan generally, but he gives sufficient history to demonstrate that much has changed, no continuity.]

p.10 Outside State investment and Chinese workers spurred on the fruit industry.

p.12 State Plan Chaac irrigation project drew peasants out of the conuco subsistence hill farming in 1966 to commercial fruit production, boosted by migrant money coming in from U.S. and Yucatan.

p.13 Brief description of the current economy of fruit exports, intermediaries.

p.14-15 Good population statistics, showing a 4-fold increase since 1900, but rather than discuss the effects of this increase, he instead chooses to look at ethnicity, saying it is unclear because most speak both Mayan and Spanish, including diversity even between generations of the same family.

p.16-17 Says media coverage, precipitated by Catholics, makes it seem like there are more Protestants than is actually the case.

p.17-18 Challenges countless ethnographers who use milpa farming to identify Mayas, saying that people assume it is 1000s of years old. He argues that in Oxkutzcab it's not milpa farming,

but farming whatsoever that designates one a Maya. Only 3% still cultivate milpa by 1988, down by 75% in 1960. Agricultural rituals, however, continue.

"Chapter Two: Social Categories in Yucatan"

p.23 Starts the chapter w/ the assertion that no one but Hanks has done a major study of social categorization in Yucatan.

p.24 Some "accept" the mestizo self-categorization "of the Maya ethnic population", but misapply "catrin" to mean non-Maya hispanics.

p.25 Uses Edwin Ardener's notion of "semantic density" and "materiality", w/ the latter referring to material reality and the former the most significant meanings of a category as expressed in social practice. [confusing: "If we assume culture is more than simply what certain people do, more than the knowledge require to be able to say why they do it, that culture is more than shared knowledge, and begin to look at widely shared perceived features of local Maya culture, we may end up with a more accurate sense of who the people are..."]

p.26 "widely shared clusters of meaning behind the use of social categories"

p.26 Catrines and mestizos can be members of the same family, and therefore cannot be members of different cultures [?]

p.26 "People in Oxkutzcab generally agree that "mestizos" are those who speak Maya, wear distinct regional dress, know how to cultivate the soil, celebrate the patron saints, dance *jarana*, and address the guardian spirits of the cultivated plots of land. Individuals in Oxkutzcab who speak Maya but wear Western style clothes are often called *catrines*." The latter is applied only to women. They only use Maya when they refer to language.

p.27 When Hervik goes into concepts for foreigners or Others, he says tz'uules are those who don't know how to make milpa [?], but the most common feature is "a set of Western cultural values and elements" [?], such as higher education, dressing in shorts, use of VCRs, phones, ghettoblasters, and cars. Spanish is first language.

p.28 J-waach is more derogatory and applied to Mexicans outside Yucatan, and is like gringo. "(M)estizos" are those individuals who are at least partially engaged in cultivating the land (milpas and orchards), wear traditional Maya clothes, and who average over 35 years of age. They speak Maya as their first language..."

p.29 In the 1960s, a "crucial break in .. continuity" of language and culture occurred w/ the intro of a road, fruit market, and electricity.

p.30 "Semantically, a catrin denotes a person of inflated elegance, overstated smartness, and an exaggerated attention to dress and appearance."

p.31 Woman because shift of clothes from jipil to Western dress is abrupt.

p.34 Beyond the 6th grade, it's obligatory to wear uniforms (and speak Spanish), thus creating catrines of all youth.

p.36 Different types of jipiles differentiate mestizos and catrines.

p.36-42 Then he returns to a discussion of social categories of the colonial period, further confounding all of this. Explains that mestizos meant mixing then, and they received privileges,

like attending mass, that the Indians did not. The 3 categories shifted from a biological basis to a social one (p.42).

p.43 confusing recounting of Caste War. Who was allied w/ whom? Indian nobles w/ Yucatecan elites? How a race war then?

p.44 "mestizo" came to replace masewal for those Mayas who did not follow the cult of the talking cross and keep up resistance.

p.47 From 1870 to 1935 the style of dress distinguished mestizos from gente de vestido.

p.49 Only by abandoning one's village could one go from a catrin to a ts'uul

p.53 The mestizo category continues to fade today.

"Chapter Three: External Constructions of "the Maya""

Uses a "cultural studies" approach, meaning always fragmented, condensed, audience-driven representations, to representations of the Maya by National Geographic, de Landa, and regional newspapers claiming that Protestants are destroying Maya culture.

p.61 Some very vague statements about culture: "The term "culture" in cultural studies recognizes the political dynamics of meaning creation and rejects academic accounts as simply people's shared knowledge and social practice. This production takes place under broader material and historical circumstances which cannot be studied *through* the products themselves. Regardless of how restraining these conditions may be and how sophisticated the production process is, the final product appears only as raw material imposed on the consumer (reader, listener, viewer or more generally "appropriator"). Cultural studies rests on the assumption that what ever representation we deal with... they shape and inform people's understandings." ?????

p.62 Buys into Lutz and Collins' argument that National Geographic is making evolutionary statements when it shows dark-skinned women topless.

p.62-3 Seems to be saying that we need to know the readers, but the rest of the chapter he makes assumptions about what middle class Americans are reading into National Geographic, and he assumes that they will be reading not to have their worldview disordered. P.63 "but it is beyond my intention in this book to document popular American perceptions of Mayas"

p.66 Some good points, such as National Geographic has an archeological concept of culture consisting of material traits in a defined horizon, vs. the contemporary [cognitive] anthropological notion of culture as shared, shifting knowledge. Also it's true that national Geographic views Mayas as timeless, personalityless when they talk about them solely as remnants of the past.

p.71 Questionable assertion: NG caption: "The soul of the Maya finds expression in all they touch, even things borrowed from other cultures. In San Mateo Ixtatán, a basketball backboard and Catholic icons are colored by a distinctively Maya hand." Hervik responds: "Garrett suggest that Catholicism and basketball cannot be Maya nor for that matter, Mexican."

p.74-5 Trashes NG for catering to Americans' Smokey the Bear attitude by claiming that slash and burn agriculture is destructive and primitive, whereas as the fire that they reported on was really started by either an engineer or hotel.

pp.77-82 Discussion of Landa seems to be to connect Landa's atrocities as an outsider representing from a "socially distant" perspective to the National Geographic.

p.82-88 Next section is a criticism of "anthropologists, sociologists, historians, reporters, and representatives of the Catholic Church" for warning that Maya culture will be destroyed by Protestant evangelization. Here he focuses primarily on locals to the region. His numbers, however, show that Protestants have been growing at a slow rate, from 12% in 1980 to 15% in 1991, and that converts often go back and forth between religions depending on the resources and attention they get, suggesting a shallow not "deep" conversion. His point is about representing the Mayas from a distanced perspective, instead of supporting Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses.

p.89 All three representational genres don't take the Mayas' own voices into consideration, and instead go back to the old model of dying culture.

"Chapter Four: Maya and 'Mestizo': Two Different Worlds"

p.91 Doesn't claim that NG is used by academics, but they work off the same assumptions.

p.92 Goes into a discussion of schemas, which refer to habitual, bounded behaviors, and cultural models, which speak to "more complex cognitive structures of knowledge such as romance and marriage". Here he argues that the categories "Maya" and "mestizo" and their schemas are incongruent.

p.93 "If we are to recognize that humans are not being pushed around by overarching and determining structures (Paul 1990:431), we must affirm a relativistic perspective as a point of departure (Barth 1990:351) and assert that shared social experience, reflexivity, and shared reasoning as inherent elements of ethnography are the only feasible means of informing our analytic concepts and anthropological knowledge." We must make them as much like us as possible and define ourselves.

Many ethnographies have a "still" emphasis: still using artifacts, rituals still being performed, etc. (p94) The search for cultural continuity undoubtedly gains a footing in the structure of academic departments" [????]. Maya studies can mean present, colonial, or precolonial.

p.96-100 In discussing Maya categories for themselves, once again he returns to features such as clothing and goes into the catrin thing as being women. Mestizo men cultivate the soil, are patrons of the family, Mestiza women are to cook, take care of the household and domestic animals. Complementarity in the food process. Confusing discussion of Upper class mestizos who dress in traditional garb more affluently are called mestizos finos, as in other places in the Yucatán, but unlike other scholars, Hervik found that they didn't claim links to the ancient aristocracy, and he doesn't see a justification for calling them anything but catrines. Those who do hold to conservative values are referred to as mestizos elevados, ahead morally, economically, linguistically, culturally. Ultimately, he point is that "the term "mestizos finos" is a label invented by researchers to denote the distinct status of certain families within the "mestizo" community." (p.100)

p.101 He refers to outsiders such as scholars, travelers, tourists, and journalists who refer to mestizos as "Mayas" to be *mayanists*.

p.102 2 prototypes for Mayas: 1) remnants of the archaic past, 2) degenerate, drunken, lazy fallen from the past (by those living in Merida).

Local *mayanists* are mestizos who have read outside sources on the Mayas and act as brokers for outsiders seeking Mayas. There are about 30 in Oxkutzcab. They read, do local ethnography, educate, and enact plays and other art forms to bolster or recover Maya culture.

p.104 Rather than searching for continuities over the past 500 years, which are unlikely, we should be looking for meaning embedded in *contemporary* society.

p.105 Does a Friedlander-esque review of the *jipil* as a post-Columbian introduction. Misreads Redfield's (1934) point about dividing Maya traits into Spanish vs. Maya origin, because he was critiquing this. [SEEMS CONTRADICTION ON THIS POINT: CLAIMS THAT CONTINUITIES DON'T EXIST, AND THEN CLAIMS THAT THEY DON'T MATTER ANYWAY, IT'S ALL IN THE PRESENT]

p.108 Claims that a tape-recorder can become a Maya cultural element, rather than simply a foreign intrusion.

"CHAPTER FIVE: Learning to Be 'Indian': Aspects of New Ethnic and Cultural Identity in Oxxutzcab"

p.111 Starts the chapter by emphasizing the commodification of Maya culture by *mayanist* brokers, as if it's done for tourist money.

p.112 Mayanist activists "strive for a unified indigenous front voicing claims for financial means to socio-economic development and cultural preservation; equal opportunities for the indigenous population; special rights for education in their own language by their own teachers; and ultimately towards some kind of independence." Borrowing the anthropological and political notion of culture, these brokers call for specific rights because of their specific cultures.

p.114 Dzul Ek, a local broker, has written a play of de Landa's auto-da-fé as a symbol of Maya victimization but resistance, and has taken considerable liberty w/ history, including making it a story for all indigenous peoples of the Americas.

p.115 "While the notion of culture embedded in political strategy is static, primordial [essentialist] and leans heavily towards tradition, his activities as a cultural practitioner are dynamic and in my opinion no less Maya".

p.116 "The argument I wish to put forward is that if we analyze contemporary Maya culture in relation to historical authenticity... we might not fully understand and appreciate the dynamic element of culture, consisting of activities such as invention..." "Culture is not simply handed down from earlier generations, it is not something you have and can lose, but is constantly being acted upon (Jackson 1989), and fused with external ideas of culture." [then is turning to the past wrong, or is it just turning solely to the past?]

p.118 Dzul Ek, among his the other hats he wears, such as lobbyist, considers himself an ethnographer, but Hervik disagrees, saying that knowing Maya culture is different than be a distanced analytic understander of it. Dzul Ek, he claims, only calls himself an ethnographer to appropriate the critical broker role as bridge to both worlds. Hervik seems competitive with him.

p.119 "For Dzul Ek the purpose of the Sac Nicté, besides its pure entertainment value, is to give the Mayas glimpses of their past in order to make them proud of their heritage, to establish an ethnic resistance by directing negative attention to the transculturation of the Maya culture, to gain support for his bilingual education project, and to capture the attention of the media in order to voice the essential needs of the Maya population." Hervik makes sure to add that the acting troupe is composed mainly of Dzul Ek's own family, who practice little and yet somehow command a following (romantic?).

p.120 Mentions his discomfort that Dzul Ek invited him to present diplomas and congratulate students in Maya writing, until he realized that his outsider highly educated status lent importance and prestige to the occasion. [YOU CAN'T CLAIM NEUTRALITY]

p.122 Admits that at the beginning of his fieldwork he also saw irony in Mayas using modern technology.

p.123 Cites Jackson (1995) in saying that being Indian in Colombia involves not getting equal rights but special rights that others don't have, such as collective rights to land. [MISSING, OF COURSE, IS A HISTORY OF CONTINUING REPRESSION]

P.124-5 "The past is constructed in the present, and the present does not reflect history." Notes that the self-consciousness of Dzul Ek and other brokers are extremely high.

p.126-7 Views elder Mayas' complaints about people speaking Spanish and wearing Western clothes as a sign not of the death of Maya culture, but a sign of the continuation of cultural conservatism. [???

Traditions become folklorized as they become nationalized and ethnic-ized.

"CHAPTER SIX: Voices in and about Popular Religion: The Competing Constructions of Participants and 'Authorities'"

This chapter argues for the revealing of the anthropological presence in the field. A very good, reflexive chapter, if seeming a bit vindictive and revealing much of his co-ethnographers. Uses Bourdieu's concepts of field (objective historical relations), habitus (embodied history), and capital (forms of power, pp.132-33) in analyzing the anthropologists' role (their scientific habitus) in the Okosta Pol (literally "head dance", p.139) pig's head ritual as practiced annually by doña Maria, the widow of a wealthy local merchant who married her when he was 57 and she was 13 (for 100 pesos). The celebration is a posada of 9 days before Xmas, or novena. After the termination of the first novena on xmas eve, another one starts in which each evening a different visitor brings food and dresses the figure of a baby Jesus. On the 2nd of January the Okosta Pol is ready to be celebrated, w/ 2 pig's head from slaughtered pigs decorated and along w/ the baby Jesus paraded through the street, accompanied by hundreds, including cross-dressers who are "lovers" of the sponsors and hosts. A dance takes place in the market, they move to the mayor's house where he is ridiculed for past mistakes and the poor living conditions of the town. (very good detail). The procession ends at Doña Maria's house, where a symbolic buying of the pigs is done, after which a party starts. In 1990, however, when Hervik was there, Maria's sister had died one month before, so the celebration was a bit more subdued, as was another death in 1994. The Maya activist, who happens to be the son-in-law of Maria, celebrates the festival "to reinforce Maya ethnic identity" (p.137). There are several other Okosta Pol ceremonies funded by organizations. The priest views these as "mistakes" of children who do not understand. Apparently the Okosta Pol is celebrated throughout Yucatan.

p.140 Hervik cites Pohl (1981) that the Okosta Pol ceremony seems to be a remnant of an old cargo transfer ceremony (good documentation, then "tradition" does exist, and he uses the term "traditional practice"), in which the pigs are substitutes for sacred deer. But "(n)o matter how important or interesting it might be, the history of the ritual and its particular elements does not explain what the ritual means to contemporary participants, and this is my major interest in this chapter."

pp.141-144 For Maria, she undertakes the celebration every year in honor of her husband the image of the baby Jesus she bought when she was young and vulnerable.

p.144-146 3 Campeche male Mayan friends help Maria celebrate it every year because of a vow they made to her years ago when her husband died. They don't rationalize it, but unreflectively practice it as tradition, i.e., quintessential habitus.

p.146-151 In this section Hervik analyzes the habitus of Dzul Ek, a cultural "broker" (commentator and participant) who is the son-in-law of Doña María's only daughter who vacations at her house and helps prepare the ritual between semesters as teacher and principal at the bilingual Maya/Spanish school in Maní. For over 10 years anthropologists, journalists, folklorists, photographers, authors and historians have been attending the Okosta Pol ceremony, and Dzul Ek makes sure they are well accommodated. They are sent to him by another larger cultural broker in Mérida who sends foreigners his way. Dzul Ek is nostalgic about Maya culture and follows the [seemingly contradictory] goals of claiming political economic autonomy while seeking funding and tourism from outside sources. To outsiders and his fellow Mayas, for whom he wants to raise awareness, he writes and holds demonstrations explaining how the modern Okosta Pol is related to ancient Maya practices, which has paid off in receiving outside funding.

Hervik concludes that trying to designate a practice like the Okosta Pol as Catholic, Maya, or syncretic is misguided, and Dzul Ek apparently doesn't take the bait on this either when Hervik asks him whether it is Catholic or Maya.

Dzul Ek considers himself an ethnographer, and thus has overlapping but not isomorphic interests and strategies as Hervik. Hervik went his own way, causing Ek some concern, but their antagonism "never became overt".

Ek also does not fully represent his fellow Mayas, some of whom have rejected his power and influence and even forced him from the management of the "center" (dance/cultural?) and caused him to set up his own dance troupe in his house.

p.151-154 In this section he looks at the position of the folklorist, one of the most interesting and revealing sections of the book. The man of concern is "Michael", from an American university originally interested in theater. Hervik learned about him through observation, informal conversation, and interviews of others. He and fiancé are annual distinguished guests and participants. His gifts and friendship insure him access, [but Hervik doesn't explicitly say that his filming of the event also lends him access]. He has written a letter of thanks to the mayor, which is displayed on the mayor's office wall. Hervik calls this "a romantic flirtation with Maya life within the confines of the friendship, peaking when Michael decided to marry his non-local fiancé in the home of his main informant."

In one incident that may inspire much of this book, Michael is video-recording a journalist's ("roberto") interview of the Campechanos about the festival, and after the interview the Campechanos told Roberto to ask Hervik about the festival if they had further questions. Roberto responded that "he does not know anything, he is too drunk to know". Hervik interprets this as competition between an anthropologically trained Mexican journalist and a foreigner like himself. The real competitor, though, as Hervik eventually "realized", was w/ Michael, who purportedly uses Victor Turner to see meaning in the ritual itself as a preColumbian continuity rather than in the social context, [even though Hervik admits that Michael and Turner see ritual and everyday life in dialectical relationship], which is undoubtedly related to his short-term folklore research and his reliance on Dzul Ek. For Hervik, "History may explain certain elements in the ritual, but it cannot tell us anything about what participation means to doña María, the Campechanos, the broker and other participants." Michael's short-term fieldwork makes him vulnerable to historical generalization and critiques against positivist dismissals that the researcher's personal experience is unimportant.

p.154-158 In this very good section, Hervik looks at his own position as an anthropologist. Questionably, he exposes doña María's sexual jokes to him during the festival in writing, about wanting him to sire a child for her.

"The folklorist and I belong to the same academic field and we are -- whether we like it or not -- in a competition which was first implicit and only later explicit in discourse and practice", a competition about the best or "most authentic" interpretation. Hervik claims to have realized

this competition fully when he sent a copy of an article w/ his explanation to Michael, and he asked to be removed from the manuscript.

Hervik also found himself in competition w/ Dzul Ek because the former was interested in contemporary agency and the latter felt that ethnography should be about learning and recording -- salvaging -- Maya culture. The competition was never overt, though, and Hervik collaborated w/ Ek's cultural center in showing a slide show of his research to a 1000 people in the park before he left.

Hervik emphasizes that other people can never be accurately represented due to diversity of voices. He seems to be saying that fieldwork must be seen as an interaction, not as an anthropologist discovering and recording, in which the anthropologist reflexively questions his theoretical models w/ their realities. This is apparently apparent in an episode when Michael and his fiancé dance in the festival while French filmmakers are trying to record it and get them out at the same time. "An irony is that the folklorist refused to respond to the filmmaker's request to step out of the production, a request not unlike his own wish to be removed from my text".

IN ANY EVENT, HERVIK OBVIOUSLY REJECTS MICHAEL'S WISHES TO BE TAKEN OUT OF HIS PUBLICATIONS, AND IN A FOOTNOTE (8, P.161) HE JUSTIFIES IT SAYING THAT THE OKOSTA POL IS A PUBLIC EVENT WHICH MICHAEL WRITES ABOUT AND PARTICIPATES IN.

CHAPTER SEVEN: "Shared Social Experience and Co-developing Reflexivities"

Hervik intends to expand postmodern attention out from just the writing of texts to the fieldwork situation itself, or as he calls it, "shared social experience", with the understanding that "much cultural experience lies beyond language". His key point is that fieldworkers are mediators between local actors and other reading scholars. He sees these interrelations as fields of power [why?]. As to what to include and what not, Hervik argues that ethnography should not be about writing solely about the anthropologist, but writing about those aspects of the anthropologist germane to his study of others.

Goes off on a tangent about how reflexivity has been used in writing, but he claims it should be recognized as a key to fieldwork itself. Reflexivity and relativism, which begin before fieldwork actually starts, are moves towards objectivity or agreement or coherence (p.167).

Again, in regards to what should be included, Hervik says that the reflexivity in writing should be limited to social and cultural backgrounds, not idiosyncratic backgrounds.

"the ethnographer has internalized or embodied some local cultural proficiency and insight which provide common points of reference in interaction" (p.167).

p.168-171 "Experience is the touchstone of good ethnography". Anthropologists have a dilemma of writing about experience without objectifying it, decontextualizing, dehumanizing it. Hervik takes postmodernists to task for approaching arrival stories solely as rhetorical strategies, whereas the arrival of the anthropologist really is a quintessential event in the field. He says, however, that it's not always to distinguish when the arrival really occurred. No encounters are new in the sense that all is framed by prior "interpretive schemas". Hervik's "Maya" schema didn't fit w/ the locally lived "mestizo" schemas.

p.172-176 Shared "social" experience because it's cultural, i.e., filtered through (cognitive) cultural models or schemas (uses primarily D'Andrade). Then he switches to Bourdieu to justify that knowledge is cultural.

To exemplify that both anthropologist and native use schemas, he cites a case in which a local woman used him as a potential monetary resource, and he and his wife used Maya women as labor resources. Each goes along adjusting their expectations [but he doesn't go so far as to say that they're creating culture together].

pp.176-182 Makes a good point that Crapanzano is reflexive about Tuhami, but doesn't allow Tuhami to be reflexive in the text, such as reflecting upon his practical relationship w/ Crapanzano. "It is therefore not surprising that Crapanzano stresses that his writing is evocative rather than informative" (p.176) [but Hervik isn't very informative either].

Hervik argues that he was engaged in fieldwork because having an entire family there couldn't have permitted otherwise. It required "mutual trust" built up gradually, unlike Crapanzano's disinterest in Tuhami's practical problems.

"We can not separate emotional and mental involvement in our relations in the field; it would be bad faith to try. Moreover, in many situations, friendship is a necessary condition for having access to personal knowledge. This condition will always carry with it the dilemma of whether you should use personal and intimate knowledge gained through friendship in scientific publications and at what cost. The dilemma is not unique to anthropology..." (p.179).

Mentions Kohn's study in his own volume that demonstrates that much of learning is not discursive, but sensate, emotional or embodied: "Kohn could learn to respond to smells in the kitchen in a culturally appropriate manner and to embody the sense of that space, without ever knowing through linguistic or any other means the tastes and the sensual experience of others" (p.181). Still, this is not knowing but imagining based on personal engagement. Carrithers (1992:148, *Why Humans Have Cultures*;) calls this "engaged learning" rather than participant observation.

p.182-186 "to express experience in language is always to objectify it." More rumination about what reflexivity is and should be. Bourdieu, for example, doesn't limit his notion of reflexivity to scholars, not to all people. Hervik, on the other hand, argues that autobiographical reflexivity is an individualism the luxury of Western privilege.

pp.186-188 In conclusion, Hervik basically is saying that reflexivity should not be an excuse for authors to explore only their textual subjectivity, but should be used to explore "shared social experience" of fieldworkers and subjects. He talks of varying reflexivities but could have spelled them out more clearly.

Claims [erroneously] that the only route to reflexivity is through shared social experience.

Still talks in terms of their vs. our habitus, rather than the formation of new ones.

We must give them the ability to be reflexive, to recognize their habitus like anthropologists learn to do when they're in the field.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

pp.191-194 Returns to his original problem: what does it mean when anthros use terms like "Maya" that the locals don't recognize. In one way, he says, it doesn't matter at all since categories always gloss over internal diversity. But he also says "Maya" doesn't have a clear referent, because it refers to people who speak similar but incomprehensible languages while ignoring their various other differences [??]. He exonerates his own use of the term "Maya" because who wants to highlight the "intricate relationship" between the external and internal categorization. National Geographic represents a socially distant, external categorization that has little to do w/ how "Mayas" actually live because they're written for a different audience. It is about our prototypes, not lived reality out there.

When addressing how we study the intersection of cultural models in practice, he finds no help from Bourdieu, who does not deal w/ embodiment of emotions, nor from Strauss, Quinn, or Lutz, who are not reflexive.

He calls for more attention to interaction of habitus and fields in individual interactions in the field. On the very last page he goes back to the folklorist Michael, which indeed makes this seem about that particular episode. [doesn't acknowledge the fact that writing about others, even his wife, is always fraught w/ power].